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THE LOST MOSAICS OF RAVENNA.

Important works have been devoted during the last few years to the mosaics of Ravenna,¹ and it is not my intention to dwell, here at least, on a subject which may appear to have been exhausted. My object in the present essay is to restore, with the help of evidence given in early writers, a series of monuments long since destroyed, and which our immediate predecessors have not sufficiently regarded. This additional information makes it possible to follow with more precision than heretofore the progress of art in this really unique city, which holds the same position for the Christian art of the fifth and sixth centuries that Pompei does for the pagan art of the first century.

CATHEDRAL OF S. URSUS.—St. Ursus built and decorated the church which bears his name (379–396). He covered its walls with precious stones, its vault with mosaics representing various figures: “Ipse eam suis temporibus fundavit et Deo juvante usque ad effectum perduxit. Lapidibus pretiosissimis parietibus (sic) circumdedit, super totius templi testudinem tessellis variis diversas figuras composuit.”²

At the beginning of the twelfth century a new tribune and a new mosaic are spoken of; an inscription fixes the date of these works, 1112.

Hoc opus est factum post partum Virginis actum

Anno milleno centeno post duodeno.

Still it is not known with certainty whether this mosaic was an entirely new one or only a restoration. Rossi has adopted the

¹ Rahn, *Ravenna. Eine Kunstgeschichtliche Studie*. Leipzig, 1869. (Extract from the *Jahrbücher für Kunstwissenschaft*.)

J. P. Richter. *Die Mosaiken von Ravenna*. Vienna, 1878. Cf. my review in the *Revue Critique*, 1878, t. II., pp. 310–318.

² Agnelli *Liber Pontificalis*: apud Muratori, *Scriptores*, t. II., 1, p. 51; and Pertz, *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*, saec. VI.–IX., pp. 265–391. Agnellus was the biographer of the Archbishops of Ravenna, and wrote about the year 839. Cf. Berti, *Sull'antico duomo di Ravenna*. Ravenna, 1880, p. 12, sqq.

second of these opinions, which has, however, few advocates. Two hundred years later the nave also was repaired, and even entirely made over if we are to believe the historian :³ "Circa Annos Domini MCCCXIV de mense Augusti tempore Domini Raynaldi Archiepiscopi constructa est de novo tota navis Ecclesiæ Ursianæ."⁴ The mosaics of the apse remained until the middle of the last century, when the ancient basilica was demolished and replaced by a rococo edifice (1734-1745).⁵ Fortunately we have of them several good descriptions and even some plates.⁶ More than this, several fragments of this interesting work escaped the vandals who committed so much havoc in the name of good taste. They are now in the chapel of the Archbishop's palace, where with singular carelessness Mess. Crowe and Cavalcaselle have confounded them with the mosaics of the sixth century which cover the vault of this chapel.⁷ These fragments consist of two medallions with saints, and a figure of the Virgin represented standing with her arms extended in the same attitude as the *orante* of the catacombs.

STA. AGATA MAGGIORE.—Girolamo Rossi relates, that the basilica of Saint Agatha was finished under Archbishop Exuperantius, the immediate successor of St. Ursus, whose death he places in 418.⁸ His opinion was adopted by Fabri,⁹ and by Ciampini.¹⁰

We know to-day that the successor of St. Ursus was St. Peter the Spaniard (396-425). A monogram, which Zirardini, the author of *Antichi Edifici profani di Ravenna*, reads "Petrus Episcopus," completes the proof that under this prelate, and not under Exuperantius

³ "Tametsi quæ graeca aliquot locis apposita sunt signa, neque in usu tum versabantur apud nos, suadere haud difficile possunt, restituisse Hieriniam potius veterem picturam, quam omnino novam instituisse: cum verisimile etiam sit tot sæculorum cursu insigni ornatu eam nequaquam testudinem destitutam." (Rubeus, *Historiarum Ravennatum, libri decem*. Venice, ed. of 1589, p. 318).

⁴ Muratori, *Scriptores*, t. II., 1, p. 210.

⁵ *Hist. Rav.* p. 318. Fabri, *Le sagre memorie di Ravenna antica*. Venice, 1664, pp. 2-3.

⁶ Buonamici, *Metropolitana di Ravenna*. Bologna, 1748-1752. Beltrami, *Il forestiere istruito delle cose notabili della città di Ravenna*, 1791, p. 9. Spreti, *Compendio storico dell'Arte di comporre i mosaici*. Ravenna, 1804, p. 81.

⁷ *Geschichte der Italienischen Malerei*, t. I., p. 27.

⁸ *Hist. Raven.*, p. 90.

⁹ *Le sagre memorie di Ravenna antica*. Venice, 1664, p. 62.

¹⁰ *Vetera Monumenta*, t. I., p. 184. Ciampini makes use of a singular expression: "in fronte habet absidem seu tribunam."

(425-432), the consecration of the basilica took place.¹¹ In the apse of this church was formerly seen a mosaic which is now known to us only from the engraving in Ciampini, "for it fell down on the 11th of April, 1688, in consequence of an earthquake."¹² We possess no early indication of the period to which this mosaic belongs, and its content does not throw any light upon this question. The whole composition consists of Christ between two Archangels. The Saviour is seated on a throne of rather heavy construction, which is covered with precious stones. In his left hand he holds a volume; his right is slightly raised, as if in the act of expounding. His cruciform nimbus is adorned with precious stones. On either side of him stands an Archangel holding a "baculus." They also have the nimbus, but it is plain. From the ground spring up large flowers, among which lilies are to be recognized.

Ciampini uses the following arguments to sustain his theory, that the mosaic is contemporary with the building of the Church: the cruciform nimbus, the gemmed throne, the "baculus" of the archangels, and, finally, the presence, on the garments, of those curious letters for which no explanation has ever been given. It is hardly necessary to remark that all these distinguishing traits are met with in works of a much later date, for example, in the mosaic of Sta. Prassede at Rome, and that they consequently prove nothing at all. Furthermore, at the beginning of the fifth century, that is, at the time when the chefs d'œuvre of the mausoleum of Galla Placidia, of the Baptistery of the Orthodox, and of other sanctuaries were not yet in existence, the presence of attributes of so precise a character as the cruciform and gemmed nimbus, the throne also gemmed, the "baculus" of the archangels, might certainly surprise us. These attributes rather create a presumption against the antiquity of the work, which is in reality not at all distinguished from those of the seventh, eighth, and ninth century, or even from those of the middle-ages.¹³ It may be added that the flowers are exactly the same as those at St. Apollinare Nuovo and other later churches.

¹¹ Beltrami, *Il forestiere istruito*, etc., p. 47.

¹² Beltrami, p. 48.

¹³ In Ciampini's engraving the mosaic is in the form of a pointed arch, but we will not lay any stress upon this peculiarity, as it probably proceeded from a license of Ciampini's engraver.

The disappearance of the original monument and the complete absence of early texts make it our duty not to be hasty in assigning a date to the mosaic of Saint Agatha. The early historians of Ravenna,—Rossi, Fabri, and others,—did not come to any decision on this delicate point: let us imitate their reserve. If the mosaic bore the date attributed to it by Ciampini, it would have been the most ancient existing mosaic in their city, and they would not have failed to study it carefully. Their silence is unfavorable to these pretensions to a great antiquity.

BASILICA OF S. LORENZO, AT CAESAREA.—Lauricius, the chamberlain of Honorius (395–423), caused to be built at Caesarea the basilica of S. Lorenzo,¹⁴ in one of whose chapels, dedicated to SS. Gervasius and Protasius, he prepared for himself a sumptuous mausoleum. According to an ancient inscription the consecration of the building took place in 435; and it existed until 1553, when it was demolished to make room for the fortifications projected by Pius IV.

This basilica was adorned with magnificent gold mosaics and incrustations of rare marbles.¹⁵ One of these mosaics represented, according to Agnellus,¹⁶ three children, who are probably the three youths in the fiery furnace, a subject frequently treated in the paintings of the catacombs and the sculptures of the sarcophagi, but no example of which had yet been met with in the wall-decorations of the basilicas.

S. GIOVANNI EVANGELISTA.—The Church of Saint John the Evangelist is one of the most important erections of the Empress Galla Placidia. It owes its origin to a vow made by this princess during a tempest in which she came near losing her life.

The author of the *Liber Pontificalis* of Ravenna tells us of the circumstances of this vow, at the same time that he describes the building raised to the Apostle St. John, the protector of the princess.

¹⁴ St. Augustine, cited by Von Quast (p. 3), says that there existed a Basilica in this place before 412. It is impossible for us to decide whether Lauricius added another, or whether he simply restored the preëxisting edifice.

¹⁵ "Sepultusque est in monasterio S. Gervasii et Protasii, juxta . . . ecclesiam (S. Laurentii) mirabiliter decoratam musiva aurea, et diversarum lapidum genera, singulaque metalla parietibus juncta." (Agnelli *Liber Pontificalis*, in vita S. Johannis, ed. Bacchini, t. I., p. 264. Pertz, p. 299.)

¹⁶ "Antequam in cubiculum arcae ingrediaris manu dextera aspexeris juxta quod effigies trium puerorum musivo depictae (musive depicta, Pertz) sunt." (loc. cit.)

His narration is all the more interesting because almost nothing remains of the work which he had before his eyes. "Galla Placidia . . . aedificavit . . . ecclesiam S. Johannis Evangelistae. Cum esset angustiosa per discrimina maris gradiens, orta procella, carina quasante a fluctibus, putans mergi in profundum, Deo votum vovit de apostoli ecclesia. Liberata est a furia maris. Et infra tribunam ipsius Ecclesiae super capita Imperatorum et Augustarum legitur ita: *confirma hoc, Deus, quod operatus es in nobis a templo tuo Hierusalem tibi offerent Reges munera.* Et desuper alium versum invenies sic legentem; *Sancto ac beatissimo apostolo Johanni Evangelistae Galla Placidia Augusta cum filio suo Placido Valentiniano Augusto, et filia sua Justa Grata Honoria Augusta, liberationis periculum (sic) maris votum solventes.*"¹⁷

Historians place the building of this edifice in the year 425, when Valentinian was named Caesar. The time of the destruction of its mosaics is unknown. Girolamo Rossi, whose work appeared in 1572 (2d edition, 1589), seems still to have seen them, as he describes them minutely, though it is possible that he copied the description given of them in an early chronicle, published by Muratori.¹⁸

Of the manuscripts of this chronicle, that which is in the Library of Ravenna (No. 138, ord. b., letter o.) even contains a miniature which may well have been inspired by the mosaics of Placidia. We see there (fol. 11 vo.) two vessels, each containing three crowned figures and two nimbed saints, one rowing and the other managing the sails (or rather the same saint represented twice). This is evidently the tempest scene. The title of this manuscript, the orthography of which differs considerably from that of the manuscript of Modena published by Muratori, is "Incipit tractatus hedificationis et constructionis ecclie s̄ci Johannis Evangeliste de Ravenna, facta per serene memorie Galam Placidiam Augustam, filiam Theodosii Augusti imperatoris."

Rossi's description is so confused that it is impossible to determine the situation given to the mosaic. So far as may be judged, there were on the arch of the tribune (or perhaps on the band of the concha) five emperors; whose names are inscribed by the side of each one, as follows: "D. Constantinus. D. Theodosius. D. Arcadius.

¹⁷ Agnelli *Lib. Pont.*, in vita S. Johannis, c. VI. Pertz, p. 307. Apud Muratori, *Scriptores*, t. II., p. 68.

¹⁸ *Scriptores*, t. I., 2, p. 567.

D. Honorius. Theodosius nep." On the left were "D. Valentinianus. D. Gratianus. D. Constantius. Gratianus nep. Joannes nep."¹⁹

The following inscription related to all these princes: "Galla Placidia pro se et iis omnibus votum solvit." This one also concerned the princes and princesses of whom we shall speak: "Confirma hoc Deus quod operatus es in nobis a templo sancto tuo, quod est in Hierusalem tibi offerent reges munera."²⁰

The princes and princesses represented "circa subsellia" were, on the right, Theodosius and Eudocia; and, on the left, Arcadius and Eudoxia Aug.²¹ If we were to admit that the portraits of the emperors adorned the opening of the hemispherical vault, it would be necessary to suppose that the latter portraits were placed in a horizontal position above the seats in the choir. In the centre of the vault was depicted God the Father, seated on a throne and surrounded by twelve sealed books; by his side was this inscription: "Sanctissimo ac beatissimo Apostolo Joanni Evangelistae Galla Placidia Augusta cum suo filio Placido Valentiniano Augusto, et filia sua Justa Grata Honoria Augusta liberationis maris votum solvit."²²

Christ held in his hand a book on which this sentence was read: "Beati misericordes, quoniam miserebitur Deus . . ." ²³ Another scene represented God delivering a volume to St. John the Evangelist, whose name was written below him "Sanctus Joannes Evangelista."²⁴ The Creator was doubtless figured by a hand appearing from the clouds. Then followed the sea with two tempest-tossed

¹⁹ "Aderant quoque Constantii, Valentiniani, Gratiani, et ceterorum ejus familie Augustorum imagines: iisque erat inscriptum: *Galla Placidia* . . . Erant autem hae imagines in arcu testudinis ad dexteram quinque, quibus sic erat adscriptum: *D. Constantinus* . . ."

²⁰ "Augustorum Augustarumque imaginibus sic erat inscriptum: *Confirma hoc Deus* . . ."

²¹ "Circa subsellia vero ad dextram in extrema parte Dn. Theodosius et Dn. Eudocia, ad lævam Dn. Arcadius et Dn. Eudoxia Aug."

²² "In testudinis templi medio, Dei imago erat pulcherrima, sedentis in solio toto templo admodum refulgens, duodecimque divinis libris, undique obsignatis, circumsepta; ab ea, quaecunque in partem templi quis respiceret, inspectabatur: cui sic erat inscriptum: *Sanctissimo* . . ." This representation of God is rather abnormal at the beginning of the fifth century: there is but little doubt that the writer wished to refer to Christ.

²³ "Ipse Christus Deus apertum in manu habebat librum, in quo sic scriptum erat: *Beati* . . ."

²⁴ "Videbatur autem in majestate Deus libellum Joanni Evangelistae porrigens cui erat subscriptum: *Sanctus* . . ."

vessels, in one of which was St. John succoring Galla Placidia, and finally the seven candlesticks and other symbols of the Apocalypse.²⁵

PORTRAIT OF THE ARCHBISHOP ST. PETER.—Galla Placidia caused to be made a mosaic likeness of the Archbishop St. Peter, for whom she felt a very great veneration. This portrait was not a mere “*imago clypeata*,” but an official portrait in the real sense of the word, representing the person, not only with his attributes, but also in the performance of the most important acts of his ministry. It decorated the apse of the Church of St. John the Evangelist. Agnellus describes it as follows in his biography of St. Peter: “*Et infra ecclesiam B. Joannis Evangelistae jussit Galla Placidia pro illius sanctitate ejus effigiem tessellis exornari in pariete tribunali post tergum Pontificis supra sedem ubi Pontifex sedet. Quae effigies ita [est] facta, prolixam habens barbam, extensis manibus quasi missas canit, et hostia veluti super altare posita est, et ecce Angelus Domini in aspectu altaris illius orationes suscipiens est depictus.*”²⁶

S. ANDREA MAGGIORE.—St. Peter Chrysologos (439-449) raised in honor of the apostle St. Andrew, near the “*Ursiana aedes*,” a church which the chronicler calls magnificent, although it was sustained by wooden columns, replaced a hundred and fifteen years later by columns of Levantine marble. The portrait of the saint was placed over the door. The following verses, given by Agnellus, will serve as a commentary on it:

“*Aut lux hic nata est aut capta hic libera regnat
Lex est ante venit cœli decus unde modernum*”

“*Divo etiam Andreæ Apostolo juxta Ursianam aedem haud procul ab Posterula, quam Vincilionis appellant, aedificavit egregium templum, ligneis tamen columnis suffultum, supra valvas, ejus imago,*

²⁵ “*Hinc atque inde mare vitreum, in quo duæ naves turbulenta tempestate, et ventorum impetu agitatae; in altera divus Joannes Placidiae opem ferens, aderat, septemque candelabra, et nonnulla praeterea ex iis, quae in Apocalypsi describuntur, mysteria:*”

If the text of Rossi were taken literally, it would follow that the candlesticks and the symbols were contained in one of the vessels, but this explanation is inadmissible: these objects evidently occupied a separate position. The other symbols taken from the Apocalypse were, doubtless, the mystic lamb, the book sealed with the seven seals, etc.

²⁶ Agnelli *Lib. Pont.*, ed. Bacc., t. I., p. 232; Muratori, *Scrip.*, Cap. IV., p. 57; Pertz, p. 291.

emblematico, vermiculatoque opere conspiciebatur, his adjectis carminibus. . . *Aut lux. . .*"²⁷

I am not acquainted with the period of the destruction of this mosaic. Rossi informs us that the inscription was "interrupta ob antiquitatem et concisa," and he uses, in speaking of the mosaic, the imperfect indicative, which tends to prove that it was no longer in existence at his time. Fabri, who wrote about a hundred years later, is more explicit; he says, "vedevasi già a mosaico l'effigie del santo fondatore."²⁸

CHAPEL OF S. ANDREA, (439-449).—"(*Petrus Chrysologus*) fecit . . . monasterium S. Andreae Apostoli; suaque effigies super valvas ejusdem monasterii est inferius tessellis depicta."

It is in these terms that Agnellus²⁹ mentions the execution of this mosaic portrait; but his testimony, apparently so clear, occasions grave difficulties. In the first place, he has forgotten to tell us whether the Archbishop Peter himself caused his portrait to be made, which question it would be premature to decide either one way or the other. In the second place, the modern editor, founding his opinion on the style of the verses inscribed in this chapel, thinks that it has to do, not with Peter the elder, but with Peter the younger.³⁰ It is evident that, in view of such uncertainty, it would be rash to assign one date more than the other to this portrait of the Chapel of St. Andrew.

BASILICA PETRIANA.—The Basilica Petriana, one of the marvels of Ravenna, was founded by an archbishop of the name of St. Peter. If we regard his title of "Antistes," it must have been St. Peter the Spaniard, who was bishop from 396 to 425.³¹ If, on the contrary, we try to determine his position by means of the mention which Agnellus makes of his successor, Neo, it was St. Peter Chrysologos (439-449).

²⁷ Rubeus, *Hist. Raven.*, pp. 105-106 from Agnellus. Cf. Mai, *Vet. Script.* t. v., p. 112, where interesting various readings of this inscription are given.

²⁸ *Le sagre memorie di Ravenna*, 1664, p. 80.

²⁹ Muratori, *Scriptores*, t. II., 1, p. 83. Pertz, p. 313.

³⁰ Agnelli *Liber Pontificalis*, ed. Bacchini, Modena, 1708, t. I., p. 329. Cf. Muratori, *Scriptores*, t. II., 1, p. 79.

³¹ Neo chose this basilica for his place of burial; his image, executed in mosaic, was to be seen in the vault of the edifice: "Sepultus in D. Petri, quod extruxerat, in cujus testudine ipsius imago emblematicè picta videbatur, cui sic erat inscriptum: *Dominus Neon senescat nobis.*" Rubeus, *Hist. Raven.*, p. 110.

This prelate, whoever he may have been, had not time to finish the building, the decoration of which seems to be due to Neo (449–452). It was remarkable for a profusion of costly marbles and mosaics. Under John V., the thirty-first archbishop according to Muratori, the thirty-fifth according to Tarlazzi,³² an earthquake utterly overthrew this basilica (607–613). Astolphus resolved to raise it from its ruins, but was not able completely to carry out this undertaking.

The following are the passages in the *Liber Pontificalis* of Agnellus, relating to the basilica Petriana. “(Petrus Antistes XVII) fundator Ecclesiae Petrianae muros per circuitum aedificans, sed nondum omnia complens. Nulla ecclesia in aedificio major fuit similis illa, neque in longitudine, nec in altitudine, et valde exornata fuit de pretiosis lapidibus et tessellis variis decorata, et valde locupletata in auro, et argento, et vasculis sacris quibus (sic) ipse fieri jussit.”³³ “(Neon XVIII) aedificator autem fuit superscriptae Ecclesiae Petrianae, cujus funditus aliquam partem Antecessor construxerat, unde necesse erat, successores antecessoris opus implere. Dehinc fuerant omnia postquam constructa aedificia et sartatecta templi innovata sunt, variis coloribus depingere fecit.”³⁴ “Johannes V., (XXXIX). Istius temporibus Ecclesia Petriana cecidit terraemotu post expleta solemnissimarum die Dominico.”³⁵ “(Astolphus) ecclesiam Petrianam, quae funditus eversa est per terraemotum, sponte aedificare voluit, et pyramides per in gyrum erexit columnas statuit quae manent usque nunc, sed non consummavit.”³⁶

PORTRAITS OF THEODORIC AT PAVIA AND AT RAVENNA (VI CENT.)—Agnellus has left a description of two mosaics of the greatest interest, which were, one at Pavia, and the other in the capital of the Exarchate. The one at Pavia contained an equestrian portrait of Theodoric, a kind of representation of which there is no other example in mosaic, unless it be admitted that the apse-painting of S. Giorgio in Velabro, at Rome, (St. George by the side of his horse), is a copy of the early mosaic of this church. This image was “in cameris tribunalis,” that

³² Tarlazzi, *Memorie Sacre di Ravenna*, p. 103.

³³ In vita S. Petri, c. I.; apud Muratori, *Scriptores*, t. I., p. 56. Pertz, p. 239.

³⁴ In vita Neonis: *ibid.*, p. 58. Ed. Bacchini, t. I., p. 237. Pertz, p. 292.

³⁵ In vita Johannis: *ibid.*, p. 170. Pertz, p. 376.

³⁶ In vita Sergii: *ibid.*, p. 173. Pertz, p. 378.

is to say in all probability, as M. W. Schmidt has remarked,³⁷ in the place where justice was administered.³⁸ In fact, a document of the year 908, published by Muratori,³⁹ mentions precisely this tribunal of Pavia attributed to Theodoric: "dum in Dei nomine, civitate Papia, in sacro Palatio, hubi domūs Berêngarius preerat in laubiam majorem ubi sub Teuderico dicitur in judicio resederet Johannes . . ." In the second mosaic the great monarch, holding in one hand a lance and in the other a shield, was placed between two figures. One of these, that next to the shield, personified Rome, which owed to Theodoric its new splendor: it bore a helmet and was armed with a javelin. The second figure, Ravenna, advanced towards its victor, its right foot resting on the sea, and its left on dry land.⁴⁰

STA. MARIA MAGGIORE.—Archbishop Ecclesius (521-534) erected this church, it is thought, shortly after his return from Constantinople. He is also the author of the mosaics which adorned its façade and tribune. In the vault of the latter was a figure of the Virgin, whose beauty Agnellus already praises.⁴¹ Although this chronicler does not speak expressly of the nature of these ornaments, it is nevertheless certain that they were in mosaic. This results from the words of Girolamo Rossi, who was able to see them: "In ejus templi testudine D. Mariæ Virginis imaginem, tanta artificis

³⁷ *Jahrbücher für Kunstwissenschaft*, 1873, p. 3.

³⁸ In vita Petri Senioris, c. II., apud Muratori et Pertz.

³⁹ *Antiq. Ital. medii ævi*, t. II., p. 933.

⁴⁰ "Anno quinto Justinii II. Imperatoris pestilentia bovum, et interitus ubique fuit; post vero depreda a Langobardis Tuscia, obsiderunt Ticinum, quæ civitas Papia dicitur, ubi et Theodoricus Palatium struxit et ejus imaginem sedentem super equum in Tribunalis cameris tessellis ornata bene conspexi. Hic autem similis fuit in isto palatio, quod ipse aedificavit, in tribunale triclinii, quod vocatur ad mare supra portam, et in fronte Regiæ quæ dicitur ad Calchi istius civitatis, ubi prima porta palatii fuit in loco qui vocatur Sicrestum, ubi Ecclesia Salvatoris esse videtur. In pinnaculo ipsius loci fuit Theodorici effigies, mire tessellis ornata, dextera manu lanceam tenens, sinistra clypeum, lorica indutus. Contra clypeum Roma tessellis ornata astabat cum hasta et galea, unde vexo telum tenensque fuit: Ravenna tessellis figurata pedem dextrum super mare, sinistrum super terram ad Regem properans. Misera undique invidia passa!" (Agnelli *Lib. Pont.* apud Muratori, t. II. Pertz, p. 337-38.)

⁴¹ "Hic pontifex in suo proprietatis jure aedificavit ecclesiam Sanctæ et semper Virginis intemeratæ Mariæ, quam cernitis, mira magnitudine cameram Tribunalis et frontem ex auro ornatum, et in ipsa Tribunalis camerae effigies S. Dei genitricis cui similem nunquam potuit humanus oculus conspiceri," (*Lib. Pont.*) Pertz, p. 318.

eruditione, opere vermiculato, pictam fuisse fertur, ut nihil pulchrius, et similius extaret. Ad ejus pedes haec carmina legebantur.

Virginis aula micat Christusque cepit ab astris

Nuncius e coelis angelus ante fuit

Mysterium verbi genitrix et virgo perennis

Auctorisque sui facta parens Domini

Vera magi claudi coeci mors vita fatentur

Culmina sacra Deo dedicat Ecclesius.

Anno MDL sede ob Pauli Tertii Pont. Max., obitum vacante, pulcherrimam eam, de qua supra diximus, imaginem D. Virginis Matris, et carmina una cum aurea pene testudine, ruina ingenti ac damno corruisse vidimus."⁴²

The same church contained, also, the image of Ecclesius offering to the Virgin and her Son the building which he had erected: the prelate was depicted as about forty years of age. The portrait survived, by several years at least, the rest of the mosaic. Fabri is mistaken in speaking of it as destroyed at the same time, for it appears clearly from Girolamo Rossi's account that in 1589 it was only threatened with destruction, but had not yet fallen.⁴³

It is thought that Archbishop Peter IV. (569-574) also caused works to be executed in this church. In fact the following inscription was read in the mosaic:

Salvo Dñ. Papa N. Petro

Laurentius V. R. Subdiaconus S. R. E.

Praepositus fabricae hujus votum solvit.⁴⁴

S. APOLLINARE NUOVO; PORTRAIT OF S. AGNELLUS.—The chronicler, Agnellus, mentions, already in the ninth century, this portrait and that of Justinian; and the way in which he refers to them makes it appear certain that they were executed by order of the archbishop himself. It is in the biography of the latter that the reference is made, and by relating his portrait to that of Justinian the chronicler can only have had in mind to mark their common

⁴² *Hist. Rav.*, p. 153; *ibid.*, p. 154.

⁴³ "Ejusdem imago templum D. Mariae Virgini, ac infanti Christo Deo offerentis, in D. Mariae Majoris cernitur, opere picta vermiculato, annos referens circiter quadraginta, sed ita corrupta ut nisi eorum, qui praesunt, liberalitas latius pateat, paucis abhinc annis penitus collapsura sit." *Hist. Rav.*, p. 154.

⁴⁴ Fabri, *Le sagre memorie*, p. 254.

origin.⁴⁵ These portraits were on the inner wall of the façade, above the door. Girolamo Rossi was able still to see them, but remarks that their preservation was defective.⁴⁶ In the time of Fabri (1664) the portrait of Agnellus had already disappeared.⁴⁷

The image of Justinian, the only one remaining, was placed a few years ago, in the last chapel on the left of the church, in a very badly lighted place, whatever may be asserted to the contrary in the inscription on a marble slab, recording its removal in 1863. The great emperor is represented in a front view at half-length (perhaps originally the portrait gave the full figure). It is certain that the sceptre which he held has disappeared. The crown rests upon his brow; over his shoulders is thrown a violet mantle which leaves his right arm uncovered. A broad nimbus, encrusted with mother-of-pearl, indicates his rank, as also does the crown. The posture is very simple, and even has a certain stiffness. As to the head, with brown outlines, and rather small in proportion to the body, the details cannot be clearly made out on account of the bad light in which the mosaic is placed: it is, for example, impossible to tell whether or not Justinian had a beard. All that can be affirmed is, that he has a round chin and rather a full face, and that, as regards character and life, this portrait is far behind that of S. Vitale. Above the nimbus is traced in large letters the name of the emperor:

I V S T I N I A N ♥ .

According to Fabri the original inscription was D. N. JUSTINIANUS IMPERATOR.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ "In ipsius fronte intrinsecus si aspexeritis Justiniani Augusti effigiem reperietis, et Agnelli Pontificis auratis decoratam tessellis." (*Lib. Pont.* in Vita S. Agnelli, ap. Muratori, *Script.* t. II., 1, p. 113: Pertz, p. 335).

⁴⁶ "Inter quas (imagines) etiam supra portam, egredientibus, laeva, imago Justiniani Caesaris videtur, dextra, Agnelli; quae ruinam ita minantur, ut arbitremur, paucos annos superfuturas." (*Hist. Rav.*, ed. 1589, p. 170).

⁴⁷ ". . . stà l'effigie dell' Imperator Giustiniano lavorata a mosaico, opera di molti secoli, e degnissima pero di esser veduta, sotto la quale leggesi il suo nome. D. N. Justinianus imperator. Stà l'Imperatore con uno scetro in mano, nella cui sommità è una croce nella forma medesima, che si vede nelle medaglie antiche; e fu fatta dipingervi dall' arcivescovo S. Agnello . . . e così anche a man sinistra stava quella del medesimo S. Agnello, che nel longo corso di tanti secoli è rovinata." (*Le sagre memorie*, p. 126).

⁴⁸ This portrait has been photographed by Ricci, of Ravenna, Cat. No. 153.

BASILICA OF S. STEFANO.—S. Maximianus (546–556) raised in honor of St. Stephen, near the “Posterula Ovilionis,” a church of great size, and decorated it in the most brilliant manner. He dedicated it on the 11th of December, 550.⁴⁹ His portrait in mosaic was placed in the “concha” of the apse (in cameris tribunae); even the circumference of this part of the edifice was decorated with enamelled cubes.⁵⁰ At the summit of the arch was a metrical inscription, which tells us that the building of the edifice lasted only eleven months.

To the basilica itself the same prelate added two small chapels.⁵¹ These also were decorated with new gilt cubes, mixed with others of different kinds and fixed in the lime.⁵² In this passage of Agnellus we notice the very singular expression “novis tessellis auratis.” This would lead us to suppose that gilt cubes which had already been used were usually employed, as in the present case he honors with special mention the use of new cubes. But this hypothesis, which would be comprehensible if it were applied to marble cubes coming from antique edifices, becomes improbable as soon as it is applied to gold mosaics. It was Christianity, not pagan antiquity, which made the greatest use of them; and it is not admissible that at the time of Maximianus, when they knew how to execute not only gilt but even silvered mosaics (for example at S. Vitale), it should have been found necessary to borrow this ornamentation from ante-Constantinian monuments. At most it might be admitted that use was sometimes made of the gilt mosaics of ruined Christian edifices, unless it be thought preferable to see in the word “novus” merely one of these redundancies so frequent in the style of the writers of the ninth century.

STA. EUPHEMIA.—Maximianus placed mosaics in the church of Saint Euphemia, at Classis, a church which was already destroyed at

⁴⁹ Pertz, p. 327.

⁵⁰ “(Maximianus) aedificavitque ecclesiam beati Stephani, hic Ravennae, levitae et martyris, non longe a Posterula Ovilionis, a fundamentis, mira magnitudine, decoravit pulcherrimeque ornavit, et in cameris tribunae sua effigies tessellis variis infixis est et per in giro mirifice opere vitreo constructa est.” (Agnellus, in Vita S. Maximianus, t. II., p. 106. Pertz, p. 327).

⁵¹ Agnellus, *loc. cit.*

⁵² “Ad latera vero ipsius Basilicae monasteria parva subjunxit quae omnia novis tessellis auratis simulque promiscuis aliis calce infixis mirabiliter apparent.” (Pertz, p. 328). Quast, *op. laud.*, p. 38, translates “monasteria” by *monasteries*, and is surprised at this addition. We have seen above that, as Ducange had already remarked, this word has in Agnellus the meaning of chapels.

the time when Agnellus wrote: "S. Petrus senior . . . in arca magna saxeâ ibidem positus fuit juxta Ecclesiam B. Euphemie, quæ vocatur ad mare, quam Maximianus Pontifex tessellis variis mire ornavit, quæ nunc demolita est."⁵³

ARCHIEPISCOPAL PALACE; BATHS.—It is well known that the early Christians often established baths near buildings consecrated to worship. Rome, Naples, Pavia, and other cities contained several. That of which we are to speak seems to have been one of the most sumptuous, and to have recalled, if not by its dimensions, at least by its ornaments, the magnificence of the ancient *thermae*. It formed a part of the archiepiscopal palace of Ravenna, and was ornamented by the Archbishop St. Victor (539-546) with rare marbles and gold mosaics. No mention is made in the text of Agnellus of the pavement-mosaic spoken of by Furietti⁵⁴ and Martigny.⁵⁵ The use of gold cubes seems rather to exclude the idea of a work of this kind.

A tablet, also incrustated with gilt letters, perpetuated the remembrance of these works by verses which Agnellus declares that he had some difficulty in deciphering. The following is the passage of the chronicler regarding this work, every trace of which has long since disappeared: "Refecitque Balneum juxta domum Ecclesie hærens parietibus muri Episcopi ubi residebat quod usque hodie mirifice lavat[ur], et pretiosissimis marmoribus pariete junxit, et diversas figuras, tessellis aureis, variasque composuit, et tabulam descriptam, literis aureis tessellatis in qua laboriose legere curavimus, et ita hos exámetros catalecticos versus in eadem conscriptos invenimus:

Victor apostolica tutus virtute sacerdos
Balnea parva prius prisco vetusta labore
Deponens mira que tamen novitate refecit
Pulchrior ut cultus majorque resurgat ab imo
Hoc quoque perpetuo decrevit more tenendum
Ut bi duo gratis clerus lavet ipsius urbis
Tertia cui cessum est et feria sexta lavandi."⁵⁶

⁵³ Vita S. Petri, ed. Bacchini, t. II., p. 187. Pertz, p. 341.

⁵⁴ *De Musivis*, p. 75.

⁵⁵ *Dictionnaire*, p. 424.

⁵⁶ In vita S. Victoris, c. I., Muratori, *Scriptores*, t. II., 1, p. 103. Pertz, p. 325.

ECCLESIA PETRIANA, AT CLASSIS; CHAPELS OF ST. MATTHEW AND ST. JAMES.—The mosaics of these two chapels were executed under St. Agnellus, (556–569), who placed in the tribune of the sanctuary consecrated to St. Matthew the following inscription, of a very doubtful Latinity: “Salvo Domino Papa Agnello, de donis Dei, et servorum ejus, qui obtulerunt ad honorem, et ornatum Sanctorum Apostolorum et reliqua pars de summa cervorum qui perierunt, et Deo auctore inventi sunt, haec absida mosivo exornata est.”⁵⁷

S. APOLLINARE IN CLASSE; CHAPEL OF SS. MARK, MARCELLUS AND FELICULA.—The archbishop John, the fourth of this name and the twenty-ninth in the general series (574–595), built and ornamented with mosaics, in the basilica of S. Apollinare in Classe, the chapel of SS. Mark, Marcellus and Felicula. This chapel received later the monument of this prelate: “(Johannes) sepultus est in ecclesia beati Apolenaris civitatis Classis extra muros in monasterio SS. Marci, Marcelli et Feliculae, quod ipse a fundamentis aedificavit et tessellis decoravit, et omnia consummavit,” etc.⁵⁸ According to Muratori the consecration of this chapel took place in 589.

S. APOLLINARE.—Reparatus (671–677), the 36th archbishop according to Muratori, the 39th according to Tarlazzi,⁵⁹ ordered that the portraits of his predecessors and of himself should be painted and incrustated “in tribunalis cameris” of S. Apollinare, and that below them the following verses should be placed:

“Is igitur socius meritis Reparatus ut esset
Aula novos habitus fecit flagrans per aevum.”⁶⁰

BASILICA OF SANTA CROCE.—Quast,⁶¹ supporting himself on the description given of this basilica by Agnellus, tells us that not only the apse but the façade of the edifice was adorned with mosaics by order of archbishop St. John. It must be remarked, however,

⁵⁷ Agnellus, *Vita S. Agnelli*. Pertz, p. 336.

⁵⁸ *Ibid*, *Vita Johannis*, p. 126. Pertz, p. 342.

⁵⁹ *Memorie sacre di Ravenna*. Ravenna, 1852, p. 504.

⁶⁰ Ed. Bacchini, t. II., p. 294: Pertz, p. 354. “Et jussit ut eorum effigies et suam in tribunali cameris (sic) B. Apolenaris depingi et variis tessellis decorari, ac subter pedibus eorum binos versus metricos describi, continentes ita: *Is igitur . . .*”

⁶¹ *Die alt-Christlichen Bauwerke von Ravenna*, p. 10.

that the chronicler of Ravenna is not as explicit as Quast is willing to believe. He speaks only of paintings: "In fronte ipsius templi introeuntes pili januas desuper depictis (sic) quatuor Paradisi flumina versus exametros et pentametros, si legetis invenietis: Christe Patris verbum," etc.⁶²

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